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THE FOUNDER'S OWN STORY

OF THE

Founding of Vineland, New Jersey.

BY CHARLES K. LANDIS.

PUBLISHED BY THE
VINELAND HISTORICAL AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY,
1903.

THE VINELAND PRINTING HOUSE PRINT.

CHARLES KLINE LANDIS
About 1867.

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Introductory.

Among the private papers of the late Charles K. Landis, which, in accordance with his Will, have recently come into the possession of the Historical and Antiquarian Society of Vineland, and which are held by this Society as among its most important and valued archives, was found the following very interesting sketch of the first steps taken, and of his first year's experiences in the Founding of Vineland. It would be scarcely possible for any other hand, though of a ready writer, to set forth so graphically and so vividly, the story of this unique settlement, itself so unlike anything the world had ever before seen, in its plans, its purposes, and its achievement. It is due to the memory of this remarkable man, much misunderstood as he was in those early days, that this frank record of his secret thoughts and motives, as of his public acts, should be given to the public substantially as it came from his own hand. It was evidently written off-hand, in pencil, and bears no marks of subsequent revision.

When this was written in 1882, after 21 years, Mr. Landis was already able to see, and had seen, with the natural eye, as before he had seen as in prophetic vision, brilliant and beneficent fruits of his great work. Indeed it was his remark in later years, that he always saw it from the beginning, just as we others see it now. Such was his profound faith in himself and in the soundness of the principles upon which he built. In this narrative of the events of 1861-2, he has introduced but few allusions to the later resulting conditions of which he might justly be proud. No one ever more truly "made the wilderness to blossom as the rose." Of no other could it more appropriately be said, "If you would see his monument, look around you."

Vineland, N. J., Oct. 13, 1903.

THE FOUNDING OF VINELAND

AS TOLD BY THE FOUNDER

My experience in the founding of Hammonton, a place covering about 5,000 acres, led me to believe that with a larger tract of land I might carry out my purposes. These were, to found a place which, to the greatest possible extent, might be the abode of happy, prosperous, and beautiful homes; to first lay it out upon a plan conducive to beauty and convenience, and in order to secure its success, establish therein the best of schools,—different branches which experience has shown to be beneficial to mankind; also manufactories, and different industries, and the churches of different denominations; in short, all things essential to the prosperity of mankind; but, at the same time, under such provision for public adornment, and the moral protection of the people, that the home of every man of reasonable industry might be made a sanctuary of happiness, and an abode of beauty, no matter how poor he might be. In fact, I desired to make Vineland so desirable a place to live in by reason of its various privileges, and over all to throw such a halo of beauty as would make people loth to leave it, and, if they did so, would draw them back again. With all of this I desired to get enough money out of it to cover my expenses for advertising, and public works, and leave me a reasonable competency besides. I never expected or particularly wished for a large fortune out of it, but I did most earnestly wish for a firm enduring success in attaining the objects herein set forth.

Before founding this colony I examined various places, knowing that location in relation to market, climate, and health, were of vital importance. I visited tracts in the upper part of the State, also different places in the West. I wanted land more adapted to fruit than to grain, because, to grow grain and stock would require much more capital than to raise fruit, and the rate of profit on stock would be much smaller. In short, fruit-culture was better adapted to the kind of town and colony that I wished to found;—it would give more opportunity for people

of small means—more chance to make beautiful and profitable homes. I decided in favor of South Jersey, because the soil, climate, and location, were best adapted to my objects. A better soil for fruit than the oak lands of New Jersey cannot be found. The climate is peculiarly temperate, and mild in winter, far more so than in New England, giving us the advantage of an earlier and longer season in which to send our fruit to market by R. R. Then, the immense city of Philadelphia was at our door. The healthfulness of the place was beyond question. What is life worth without health! As I intended to stake my own health and fortunes upon the success of this colony, I was perhaps all the more careful upon this point.

I learned that Richard D. Wood, an eminent merchant of Philadelphia, a Quaker, was the owner of a tract of 18 or 20 thousand acres of land on a new railroad just completed to Millville. This railroad had been surveyed by a young engineer of my acquaintance, Geo. B. Roberts. I called upon Mr. Wood in Philadelphia, and explained to him my design in full. Instead of considering it Utopian, he appeared to enter into and appreciate the idea, and said that he was particularly interested in the actual settlement of his wild land, in order to afford the people of Millville an opportunity to get supplies of market produce. I explained to him fully my design of selling the land to actual settlers only, and not to speculators. This was in the early Spring of 1861, just at the time when the black clouds of war were beginning to lower darkly over the horizon of our country. One evening we—Mr. Wood and myself—started from Philadelphia by railroad, to visit Mr. Wood's tract. We went as far as Glassboro by the West Jersey R. R., and thence by the new road then called the Millville and Glassboro R. R. which Mr. Wood himself controlled. The train consisted of an engine and one small car. I think there were about three passengers besides ourselves. After a slow run we got to Millville in the dusk of evening. I stopped at a hotel kept by a Mr. Wescott. Mr. Wood stopped at a house in charge of an overseer. In the evening I found that the town was a small and poor place. The streets were not paved and had no sidewalks. They were deep in sand, and pigs were allowed to run at large. The houses were small frame buildings, old and dilapidated. The place looked as though it had been finished long ago. The next morning I got up early, and went out before breakfast to see the town, and seek information about its shops, lumber yards, and other facilities, as I knew that it would have to be the base of operations for our supplies for several years to come. I walked up the street, and noticed a man taking down the shutters from an oyster saloon. Thinking this a

good opportunity for a talk with him, I walked up and requested an oyster stew, which he made with a spirit lamp. I soon got a great deal of the information I wanted, when he commenced telling about the forlorn condition of Millville. Said he, "It is a miserable place to live in, as we have no vegetables except what they bring by the wood shallops from Philadelphia,—no potatoes, no cabbage or turnips." "How about fruit?" "That is something we scarcely expect. We never see a strawberry, pear, peach, or apple, unless we go to the city." "Why do you live here?" "Because I do not know how to get away. I am making a living here, such as it is, but I hope to get away before long." Rising from my seat, I said, "My good man, do not despair. It will not be long before you will have in this town an abundant supply of vegetables and fruits, all you want, all kinds, not by the small box, but by the wagon load. You will have the finest of fruits, strawberries, raspberries, grapes, pears, apples, all kinds in their season, peddled thro' the town, and offered from door to door." Who is going to do all this?" "I am going to do it." I walked out, and after I had got some distance I looked back and saw the man standing in the street, looking after me, wiping his hands upon his apron. I can see him now. I wonder what he thought. This was a Mr. Wells, afterwards Mayor of Millville. I knew enough of the land and of Mr. Wood to feel perfectly certain that I should commence the work.

Going back to the hotel I saw six or seven men standing in front of the door. It was not yet open. I asked someone what was the matter. The reply was that they were waiting for their bitters. A man from this crowd crossed the street and came over to me where I was standing and wanted to know if I were Mr. Landis of Hammonton. I replied, "I am." "I heard," said he, "that you came down with Dicky Wood," as he called the polite and even venerable old gentleman, "and I wish to give you a word of warning." "What is it?" "Well, he is very sharp, and if he gets you into his clutches he will hold you hard to any contract you make." "Will he keep his contract?" "Oh yes, but he will make you keep yours." "Then I am not afraid. I shall make no contract that I am not willing to keep." I afterward found Mr. Wood an excellent man to do business with, and I also bought property to the amount of many thousands of dollars from this very man who would have sent me away with a warning.

That day Mr. Wood drove me over his tract. I had seen enough in the railroad cuts, coming down, to convince me that the land was very good, and this exploration confirmed my opinion. We dined at the house of Wm. D. Wilson, at Forest Grove. He, in partnership

with Mr. Wood, carried on a lumber business at that place. He evidently looked upon me with suspicion, after he heard that it was my design to build a city and improve the country. His mind could not take it in. He could not be blamed.

Upon my return to Philadelphia I found that Mr. Wood was disposed to be slow and cautious. His price was exorbitant, to begin with, at that time— ten dollars per acre without the timber. I decided, however, to humor him in the negotiations; not to hurry but to call upon him every day. After I had been to see him every day for a week, he decided to visit Hammonton which he did in company with his son Richard. He was more than pleased,—in fact, astonished to see a beautiful place produced in so short a time out of the New Jersey wilderness. It convinced him that I possessed some capacity in that line. He then requested me to go over his tract of land with him again. This time I stopped at his house. His wife was there. In the evening she asked me to describe how one of the avenues in my proposed colony would look after it was finished. I described it to her as faithfully as I could. The next morning, after I got into the buggy with Mr. Wood, he said he had a little matter to tell me. Said he, "My wife awoke me about half past two o'clock this morning and said she wished to caution me against making any agreement with you, as she is afraid you are of unsound mind, owing to your description of the avenue last night She said she had no doubt of your sincerity. But what I wish to say, Mr. Landis, is, that our people, inexperienced in business, have no conception of what can be done. When you talk to me of the grand possibilities of enterprise, it is all right, as I have seen a great deal myself, in my time," (he might have said, truthfully, that he had done a great deal.) "and I would suggest to you that when my wife, or my partner, Wm. D. Wilson, asks you questions, you had better not give them any more than their minds are prepared for."

The trouble in Mr. Wilson's mind resulted from a question he asked me one day, when we were going up together in the cars. Along the line of the railroad there was at that time a great deal of swampy land, covered with water, and looking impassable. Turning to me he said, "Mr. Landis, what do you propose to do with this land?" "Drain it all," I replied, "and reclaim it. Along the railroad, on both sides, where we are now going, I intend to make a good carriage road after the land is reclaimed." He said nothing in reply, but told Mr. Wood that I must be demented in thinking of such an impracticable undertaking. It was afterwards done.

During the progress of the negotiation Mr. Wood several times

suggested that I should commence operations, and the details of the agreement should be settled afterwards. My reply was, that I "should not commence one move until I had a written agreement."

Finally he suggested that we should see his lawyer, St. George Tucker Campbell. This we did, and explained the nature of the agreement that was wanted. Mr. Campbell half listened, constantly interposing objections, raising difficulties and starting questions directed to Mr. Wood and myself. I kept out of it and allowed Mr. Wood to do the talking. After about two hours we left, and as we went out of the door Mr. Wood remarked, "Mr. Landis, if we are ever to have an agreement we have got to make it ourselves, without the lawyers." He then requested me to write such an agreement as would suit me and bring it to him the next day. This I did and left it with him. The day after I called, and he said it was satisfactory, with the exception of one word. He wanted the work "wood" substituted for "timber." I agreed to take the land at $7.00 per acre, without interest for three and one-half years, he reserving the timber, which I was allowed to have as wanted, by the appraisement of three disinterested persons. If I had had the cash, no doubt I could at that time have bought the land for much less. I had means, not at that time available—not great, but which I afterwards put into the enterprise. My available cash was about $500 in gold, which my mother had saved up, and which she handed over to me cheerfully, without question or hesitation, with a mother's faith and devotion. With this amount I was to commence operations upon my favorite doctrine of "Pay cash as you go." Some may say, a difficult problem to carry out with so small a sum, and so rash an enterprise, yet it was done. The agreement was signed in July, 1861.

The principles that I designed should govern my enterprise for all time to come, if possible, were clearly defined in my mind and I decided to make them an integral part of each written contract, so far as it could be legally done. These were, to sell under improvement stipulations, to the effect

That a habitation should be erected within one year on each plot of ground sold. This was done to insure the success of the place; to bring business, and insure the establishment of all the concomitants of civilization—stores, churches, schools and manufactories.

That at least two and one half acres of land should be cleared and cultivated each year;

That the houses should be set back at least seventy-five feet in the country, and twenty feet in the town, in order to afford room for flowers

and shrubbery;

That shade trees should be planted along the entire front of each place within a year. This was done for beauty, shade, health, and to afford a harbor for birds, which I regarded all important, as against insect enemies in a fruit country.

And that no man should be required to build any fence, and that where it was done it should consist of a hedge, or a good board and picket fence. I wished to do away with the necessity of fencing, owing to the enormous expense of building fences and keeping them up. This would not only save fencing but would prove conducive to good agriculture by the saving of manures. The improvement also would not only build up the city and country, but act mutually to the benefit of each improver, and insure an increase in the value of his property; and while each man would stand independent and alone, at the same time the whole thing would be co-operative.

In the center of the tract I designed a model town of a mile square for residences, business, and manufacturing purposes, which would be a center of trade, and all sorts of conveniences to the entire colony, and a home market.

The whole tract was a wilderness of a forbidding aspect; no beautiful parks, but oak of second or third growth, pine and brush, all of which had been swept by fires. The lay of the land was graced by no pleasing diversity of surface; it was level, with sufficient roll for drainage—about nine feet to the mile—but many miles were covered by small streams and swamps that needed to be drained. That it had no population was a positive advantage, as it lessened the opposition I would meet with in my plans. Yet there was a population to a certain extent, of wood choppers and charcoal burners who lived around in log cabins with clay floors, a people as simple, and almost as barbarous in their habits as though they lived a thousand miles from Philadelphia. The policy of all the landholders had been an extremely selfish one, opposed to selling small holdings for fear of depredations upon their timber, which really was of no great value. This narrow view kept the people degraded, and the country a wilderness. These wretched people worked for only fifty cents a day, paid in orders on the stores at Millville. Their supplies usually consisted of pork, whisky, and tobacco and an occasional calico dress for wife or daughter. They owned no land. There were scattered upon the tract several persons who did own land, but they possessed very little. Mr. Wood had started a clearing of 300 acres upon the Main Road and had erected a house in which lived Andrew Sharp, a farmer whom he had selected to run the business.

My plans for laying out the place had already been matured. Along each side of the railroad there was to be an avenue 100 feet wide; around the mile square, avenues 100 feet wide; Landis, Chestnut and Park Avenues, to be 100 feet wide from Malaga Road to Main Road, all lined with a double row of shade trees; the streets in the town to be 66 feet wide; the farm roads 50 feet wide; all to be lined with shade trees, and the roadsides to be seeded to grass to keep down noxious weeds. The roads were to be laid out as nearly at right angles as was practicable. I rightly expected that this would make one of the most beautiful places in the country, and that the lack of natural scenery would be made up by the labor of art. This result was to be reached after the planting of orchards and vineyards, shade trees and miles of hedges.

Intending to make it a vine country, I called it Vineland. I decided that, if possible, it should be free from taverns. I thought that this might be accomplished in the start, with an industrial population. In fact, I did not see how the people could succeed without temperance, as well as industry. The labor to be done in the clearing of the Vineland tract was something stupendous; and besides this, a living was to be made. I knew that, for years, rich people would not come to such a banquet as this, where they would not be permitted to buy on speculation. It was therefore important that people should have the full use of their health, strength, and faculties, that they might be able to labor with all their might, and efficiently, and also be happy in their homes, with all of which liquor sadly interferes. In fact, I had never known a sober man to be a pauper. I also knew that the temptation to drink would be much stronger in a new country than in an old one, and that wives and families would be terrified if the evil of drink were to be added to the trials they would be called upon to endure. In short, I intended to fight this battle of the wilderness with sober men. I fully appreciated the magnitude of the work before me, the clearing of miles upon miles of wild land, the draining of miles of swamps, the building of many miles of roads, the organizing of churches, schools, societies, and industries; in short, planting in this dark and forbidding wilderness the industries, the arts, and even the elegancies of civilization, and doing it at once. It never entered into my head to be long about it, but yet to stick to it, whether for a short or long time, until it was done.

I advertised for a surveyor, and engaged a tall Scotchman who brought satisfactory references. My preparations necessarily required some little time, after which, on the evening of the 7th of August, 1861, I left Philadelphia to start this work. On the train there were

perhaps a half dozen passengers. Before we got to the nearest regular station, Forest Grove, I desired the conductor, who was also one of the lessees of the road, to let us off at an old wood road that led to the farm of Andrew Sharp, and thus save us 7 or 8 miles of walking. This he refused to do in a most peremptory manner. I then stated to him my business. He simply looked at me, shook his head and left me. And yet my work was to bring his road more passengers, and more business than any other upon the line for many years to come. We had to get off at Forest Grove station, and start upon our walk of six miles. We did not get to Sharp's farm until after dark. As we walked up to the house several dogs flew out at us, which soon brought the people of the house to the front. The Sharps were at least glad to see us in their lonely isolation. That night I engaged several choppers for the next day.

On the morning of the 8th of August we were up early. It was a beautiful, clear day, but very warm. I had shown my plan to the surveyor the night before, and I had noticed that he was silent. Now, before starting out, he was disposed to give me his opinion, which was to the effect that my plan was not practicable. That I had laid out the streets and roads uselessly wide, and upon such a scale that nobody could ever be made to believe that it could be carried out; and that the design was far too magnificent for the country, or the opportunity He would advise doing away with the mile square for the town plot, and make it much smaller; and instead of ignoring the old wood roads of the country, he would utilize them by selling land upon them, and save the expense of opening new roads; also, that if anybody should be found willing to buy any of the land, he would advise the selling it without any improvement stipulations. He would not exact them for fear that it would prevent sales. I replied that a magnificent design would add value to the property, and that the stipulations would give assurance to people that it would be carried out. His ideas were conventional, and sounded wise and prudent, but were such as would surely fail. I saw that he had no faith in my enterprise, and looked upon it as the visionary scheme of a dreamer.

We breakfasted early, and were taken to the railroad by Mr. Sharp, within about three quarters of a mile from the point I wished to strike, which was the center of the tract. On reaching that point I moved a little farther south where the ground was higher, and then directed the stake to be driven for the center of Landis Avenue and of Vineland. From this point running eastwardly, Landis Avenue was surveyed and opened by clearing the ground 100 feet wide, but some of

the best trees were left along the sides, for shade. This was the beginning of the grand avenue ten and a half miles long. When the instrument was properly adjusted, and a right angle taken to the line of the railroad, the line was started, which was the beginning of all the work since done in Vineland. As the surveyor was sighting through the instrument, an old man came along the railroad, and looking at us curiously, said, "What are you doing? Building a railroad?" "No," I replied, "I am about to build a city, and an agricultural and fruit-growing colony around it." "What do you say?" I repeated my answer and then said, "At this spot I am now opening a grand avenue a hundred feet wide, and around here in a few years you will see built hundreds of houses, dwellings, churches, school houses, stores and factories, and around the town an agricultural country, where products will be grown adapted to this soil and to this climate. The streets will be lined with shade trees and hedges, and I know that it will be one of the most beautiful places upon the face of the earth." He simply stared at me, and said nothing, but kept moving off. When I had stopped speaking, he went up to one of the workmen named Loder, and talked very earnestly to him. I afterwards learned that he strongly advise i Mr. Loder to get his pay as often as possible, for he was sure that the man, (meaning me) was crazy. Not to digress, I shall merely add that that man lived to see all that I had said fulfilled.

During the week, though my force was small, the work progressed rapidly. I had carefully reflected upon the question of labor and wages. In deciding this question I first considered what was right; next, what was best for the proposed colony, and what was best for the laborer himself. I believed that labor inadequately paid was bad for everybody. It would keep the laborers in a condition of squalor, and make the place appear by no means prosperous. What would a man think, if, when he asked the price of labor he should be told that it was fifty cents per day? I decided to pay one dollar per day in gold, upon which at that time the premium was very small. At the end of the week, instead of giving the men orders upon the stores at Millville, at the rate of fifty cents per day, as they expected, I paid them in gold at one dollar per day, at that time the current wages elsewhere in civilized places. They were much astonished, and two of them did not want to take it, saying that the clerk at the store knew better what they wanted than they did themselves. This will scarcely be believed. It shows the depth of the ignorance that then existed in this wilderness I remarked that it was time they had learned the use of money, and paid them. Low wages are decidedly injurious

to humanity. It degrades all, rich and poor, giving one class more than sufficient for their needs, encouraging luxury, selfishness and self-conceit, at the expense of the other class who are robbed and impoverished, and deprived of all opportunity for self-improvement. My colony was not made for a class; but in all things I adopted a policy which would comprehend the whole. I also felt that in this way I would gain co-workers.

I made no attempt to advertise or to sell land until my avenue should be opened to Main Road, then called Horse Bridge Road, a distance of a mile and a half. I employed myself in getting up the first number of the *Vineland Rural*, and on my map, having it drawn off from my own outlines. In the latter work I was greatly annoyed at the unfeigned astonishment of my surveyor, and his sarcastic questions and remarks. I felt, however, that I might reasonably expect a good deal of this for some time to come, and I hoped that as he saw people buying land and improving it after a while this would wear off. I also engaged in the buying of some pieces of land, lying within the bounds of my tract, which Mr. Wood did not own. Those who had such pieces of land were anxious to sell. John M. Moore of Clayton had about 800 acres, which I bought on mortgage. He afterwards said that this sale started him in business. He also consented to act as my agent in New York, he having an office there. I was occupied with these matters until October, when I inserted my advertisements in several New York papers, and went to Vineland to take up my residence there and personally manage my work.

Owing to his strong recommendations and assertions of what he could do, I then engaged a man to sell land as an agent. This man was highly recommended to me by an old friend, and as he was acquainted with property holders in South Jersey, I thought he could help me in buying up the exceptions—that is, the small tracts within the boundaries of my purchase, held by other parties. As a general thing those parties were anxious to sell, and no wonder. There had theretofore been no demand for the land, except for wood. When I purchased from Mr. Moore his anxiety to sell was amusing. From the time I saw him he never let go of me. He invited me to his house at Fislerville (now Clayton) to stay all night. The next morning he took me to Philadelphia to the office of his conveyancer, and never let me go until the papers were all made out and executed. I humored the thing on the principle that the time to strike is when the iron is hot.

Before advertising, I had the postoffice established at Vineland. I first made the necessary application, and was refused on the ground of

having no population. I then went to Washington and saw the Second Assistant Postmaster General, but I could not move him, as he said the department had to be economical. Going back to Willard's hotel, I there met Robert Tyler, son of President John Tyler, whose acquaintance I had made in Philadelphia. I explained to him my failure, when he said that the Second Assistant was a personal friend of his, and that he would go back with me. The next morning we called there. The official explained to Mr. Tyler the absurdity of establishing a postoffice in such a wilderness where there were no people. Turning to him Mr. Tyler said, "It is no wilderness since Mr. Landis has resolved to build a city there. He has it in his head, and all he has to do is to transfer it to the land. He is the man who founded Hammonton—an enterprise I should have counted among the impossibilities had I not known of it. From what he tells me I am sure that Vineland is a much greater affair." I was amazed at Tyler's remarks, and still more so at the effect it had upon the official. He at once withdrew his opposition, and said that he would give me the office if I would agree to pay twenty dollars per year toward the expense of mail carriage, which I did. I was then appointed postmaster.

I had at this time Landis Avenue opened through from the railroad to Main Road. I then got out my paper, the *Vineland Rural*, and inserted a short advertisement in the Boston Journal, the New York Herald, and the Public Ledger.

I then went to Vineland for permanent business, and engaged rooms of Andrew Sharp at his place on the corner of Main Road and what is now Park Avenue. I had the room in the northeast corner, and the rooms opposite I had for my maps, and business table, and the draughting board of the surveyor. I began soon to get letters which I would answer, and to all correspondents also I sent the *Vineland Rural.*

Mr. Wood had become quite impatient to see something done, and often asked when the work was to begin. I answered that it was going on; but, like any outsider, he of course could not see what I was doing. Finally, a little Englishman came down from New York. I took him to Sharp's farm, showed him my maps and explained my objects. The next day I went out with him and sold him some land on the Boulevard near Oak Road. He wanted his deed at once. I drove him down to Millville and had the deed signed by Mr. Wood and his wife, who were both there. I paid Mr. Wood his portion, and kept the balance. Under my arrangement with him I was to pay him a certain amount per acre for every deed he signed, until I had paid him enough to take a deed myself. I shall never forget his look of astonishment as he received

this money. He was astonished at the whole transaction—to think that a man should come down from the state of New York, and purchase a piece of this land for cash! At the close of this transaction he said that he would accompany us to the Sharp farm. When we got there he took Mr. Sharp aside and had a long conversation with him. Sharp came into the house laughing. I wanted to know what about. After enjoining me not to repeat what he would tell me, he said that Mr. Wood told him about the sale just made, and charged him to help and facilitate Mr. Landis in every possible way; for, said he, "He must be a great man." Such was the effect produced by the first sale.

I now asked the lessees of the railroad to build a platform station at the Landis Avenue crossing, to land my passengers. The lessees refused, as they had no confidence in the enterprise;—did not believe that a station would ever be required there, or that it would ever do business enough to get their money back. Finally I had to furnish the few dollars' worth of rough lumber to have the platform built. I think I also built it.

I was now very much annoyed by the want of confidence on the part of my surveyor. He evidently thought it a chimerical scheme to build such a place as I contemplated in this South Jersey forest. I looked upon this want of faith as an impediment in my way. He was also exceedingly consequential with strangers—a thing I very much dislike. Assumption in my view is not only the concomitant of a small mind, but also of a small heart. It was important for me to have the conditions around me all right, as I was working up to that most difficult point, getting a start. I had a number of people coming down, but after Mr. Colson's purchase it was difficult to make sales. There was such a desolation in the appearance of the place that the idea of locating in such an unattractive locality sickened people.

Finally, a Capt. Post came from New England, and bought 60 acres of land opposite Sharp's farm, on a new road which I was then opening and which in honor to him I called Post Road. He paid me cash, and this enabled me to make a strike which I had contemplated for some time, to give my settlement a start. I had noted my best workmen, and found out who of them understood farming and gardening, and proposed to them to buy ten acres each, offering at the same time to furnish them lumber and a carpenter to build for each a small house, payable on long time. This proposal astonished them so much that at first they held back, but I had gained their confidence by paying cash, and by the work they saw going on, and they soon fell in with it. This started a number of homes in different places, so that when I drove my

visitors around the tract they would here and there see a new improvement going on, which gave the thing a look of reality and business.

Capt. Post decided to build at once, and this also was a great help to me. I sent for a builder at Hammonton, and another at Millville, to make estimates. The talk of the Hammonton man afforded great confidence, as he had seen what I had done at Hammonton, and his faith in me was unbounded. It appeared to place me in the position of an already victorious general. These builders arrived in the afternoon, and after supper went out for a walk together. When they returned I noticed Packard, the Hammonton man, enjoying a hearty laugh by himself. I desired to know what the fun was. Said he, "Mr. Landis, that man was quite overcome with astonishment and fear when we walked along Main Road and came to Landis Avenue. Looking at that avenue 100 feet wide, he said such a road would not be needed for a hundred years, and that you would be stopped. I asked him how you could be stopped from building on your own land. He replied that you must be stopped; that there were plenty fools in Millville, who would be wanting to imitate every improvment, as you call it, that you should make?" It afterwards turned out that there were a good many such fools!

I kept pressing on and pushing my business, and visitors increased in number. Sharp's farmhouse was crowded, much to his surprise. When there were more ladies than there were beds for, I always gave up my room and slept downstairs upon the floor, rolled up in a buffalo robe. I would have slept out of doors on the sharp edge of a plank if my success required it. Moreover, the example enabled Sharp to fill his floors all over, with people with much less grumbling. My engineer, being of no use to me as a salesman, owing to his utter want of faith, I had to shoulder the spade myself, and attend to all the visitors. I think that for some time my daily walk might average twenty miles. I found that I could talk the obstinacy and opposition out of a visitor much more easily if I walked him down tired. I soon discharged both assistants, and engaged a young engineer by the name of Jones, whom I had employed at Hammonton after Brown had left on account of ill health. Brown is now chief engineer of the Penn. R. R. Jones was as full of faith as Packard; never talked about his family connections or self-sacrifices in coming to Vineland, but had a practical idea of his business which he had acquired at Hammonton.

In selling land I had a standard rule, which was, to sell to a visitor the best location I had for the objects he had in view, and to make the sale and improvement of the good locations sell the less valuable. In

this way property was certain to rise in value in the hands of the purchasers. They were sure to make good reports, and that would bring a yet more rapid increase of population. I noticed however that many who bought land were not farmers, but I thought they might learn. Still, there were some that I should have refused to sell land to had I known them as well as I have since, by the light of subsequent experience. Yet even these did well. Their property increased in value greatly, and they could sell out to advantage, getting something over and above what they paid me. This was uniformly the case and there was no change until after the speculative rise in the value of improved places, years after. I now sought to make sales of the farm lands only, making no effort to sell town lots. I thought it advisable to turn the wild land into farms first, in order to give the town some support. Lumber and goods began to come in by railroad, but I was greatly embarrassed for the want of a station. The railroad lessees still pretended a lack of faith.

The place was also in great need of a blacksmith. I arranged for one to come from Philadelphia, but he changed his mind. I then made arrangements with a man from Vermont, and located him on Main Road. He bought lumber for his shop and bought his tools. While he was at work, starting his place, some old Jersey teamsters came along, and asked him what he was doing. When he stated his business, they wanted to know who he expected would want blacksmith work in such a God-forsaken place as that. They so discouraged him that he moved away with all his lumber and tools. He was panic-stricken. Nothing that I could say could change him. He left Vineland the next morning.

About this time came Capt. Holbrook, of Massachusetts, an old ship carpenter who had been upon a man-of-war, had also commanded a vessel of his own, and had traveled largely over the world. When he got up to Sharp's farm he was very angry. He said that he expected to see an improved country instead of a wilderness. In fact he was a rather high-tempered old seaman. I pacified him as best I could, assuring him that I would pay all his expenses if he did not like the place before he left. At this he calmed down entirely. After being around a few days he came up to me and said, "Mr. Landis, I wish you to locate me twenty acres of land. As you are better able to judge of the future of the place than I am, I leave it to you to select the location." I selected for him a piece of ground in a high situation, south side of Landis Avenue, near Valley Road. He paid me $20. per acre for it. He afterwards sold a part of it for $500 per acre. After

he had taken his agreements and made his payments, I asked him how he came to purchase, after having been so dissatisfied as he was at first. He said, "After a few days' observations I saw plainly that you are in earnest, and mean business. I verily believe that in time you will make Vineland a successful and prosperous place." These were words of real encouragement, and I valued them highly. How blessed is a word of good cheer in the struggle of a great effort; and yet how necessary it often is to struggle along without it.

As a contrast to the conduct of the frank and confiding old sailor, I shall mention another experience. One evening there arrived a lady. She was alone. Her figure was tall and angular. Her face was sallow, and there were two projecting teeth. Her hair was black, worn in long curls. She was dressed extravagantly in black silk and flounces, and wore a profusion of gold chains and rings. She was a maiden lady of about forty summers, very airish, and full of talk. She represented herself as from Georgia but originally from Maine, and as possessed of a large amount of property in both states. After she had been at Sharp's some days noticing different people buying, she was seized with the fever, and requested me to locate for her a five acre lot and a forty acre lot, upon which she said she would erect handsome buildings in order to give me a start. I thought that for so good a woman, and so kind, I ought to do my best; so I ordered Mr. Packard, whom I had appointed an agent, to sell land for me, to show her forty acres at the N. E. corner of Landis Avenue and Main Road, and five acres at the corner of Landis Avenue and East Avenue, at $20 per acre, locations which have since become of very great value. Packard went out with her and did not return until late in the afternoon. My first question was "Have you sold her a place?" "Yes." "Where?" "Out of the world." "How is that?" "I first showed her the locations you directed me to show her. After looking at them she then requested me to show her a location as far in the opposite direction as I possibly could. She said it was her way to first get the advice of a party interested in a thing, and then to go as far opposite as possible. I have sold her a tract of land about two miles west of the railroad, and on an avenue south of Landis Avenue, directly in the wilderness."

I thought at first it was a joke; but when I came to see her, and advised her to take the locations first shown her, she cut me short in a most peremptory manner, and insisted upon taking the land she had selected. She paid her money, received her deed, and at once commenced the erection of a house. But this was not the end of it, as I afterwards found out, before the next season was over.

I did not always have people around, affording me the pleasure and excitement of selling land. There were many days and weeks during that long and tempestuous winter when nobody came. My correspondence and postoffice duties were not sufficient to keep me occupied. To say that I never had moments of depression when I looked out of my window upon the boundless stretch of wilderness before me, would be simply untrue. The southeast winds at night would often howl around the corner of the house where I slept, sounding like wailing voices of ill omen and mockery. I knew that there was not a human being in the world upon whom I could lean for assistance or encouragement, and the financial responsibities I had assumed were simply enormous for me, and for that matter for almost anybody. I had others dependent upon me, and as I listened to the dismal sound of the wind, and thought of the possibility of no visitors coming to buy land, I would be struck almost by an icy chill. The greatest relief I found was in prayer, though few would have suspected me of religious proclivities. But I always had, and have, an abiding faith that God hears prayer, and in beneficence. There may be many things in this world that we cannot understand; but perhaps its calamities may even look to us as of small importance when we look back upon them from the immortality of the great hereafter. If the reader of this should be in dire distress or misfortune, if he has not done so, let him try the consolation of a silent and secret prayer, and he will see if he does not rise from it with renewed strength, determination, and powers of endurance.

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